

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

PARIS FOR UNESCO; ROME FOR FODAG; VIENNA FOR IAEA & UNIDO;
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1. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

THE ORGANIZATION AND MECHANISMS FOR COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY IN LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED TO THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF PLANNING) IN MID-1971 GAVE A FORMAL DESIGNATION OF A FOCAL POINT WITHIN THE GVN. (PRIOR TO THAT TIME MUCH OF THE COORDINATION WAS CARRIED OUT ON AN INFORMAL BASIS BY USAID WHICH HAD, AND STILL HAS, BY FAR THE LARGEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN VIETNAM.) ALTHOUGH THIS MECHANISM HAS NOT ALWAYS FUNCTIONED AS EFFECTIVELY AS COQDDMNMZIKORE EXISTENCE OF A MECHANISM WITHIN THE GVN HAS BEEN A LONG STEP FORWARD.

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2. ROLE OF UNDP IN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

SHORTLY AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, THE UNDP SYSTEM OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMING WAS INITIATED. THESE TWO EVENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED THE COORDINATION OF UNDP PROGRAMS WITH OTHERS AS WELL AS THE INTERNAL COORDINATION OF UN PROGRAMS WITH EACH OTHER. THE STRENGTHENING COORDINATING FUNCTION OF THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE HAS BEEN FACILITATED BY CLOSE WORKING RELATIONS WITH THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER MINISTRIES (ALTHOUGH THE FORMER WAS INTERRUPTED TO A DEGREE WHEN THE MINISTER AND VICE-MINISTER OF PLANNING WERE REPLACED BY A NEW COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF PLANNING IN OCTOBER 1973). COORDINATION WITH THE IBRD IS JUST NOW BECOMING RELEVANT AS THE IBRD INITIATES ITS FIRST PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM. TWO PLANNING SEMINARS IN IRRIGATION AND MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY, CHAIRED JOINTLY BY THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, PROVIDED EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF APPROACH AMONG REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IBRD, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) AND THE FAO, AS WELL AS OTHER DONOR EMBASSIES IN SAIGON AND THE INTERESTED GVN MINISTRIES. THESE SEMINARS INFLUENCED TWO LARGE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN IRRIGATION JOINTLY INVOLVING THE FAO, ADB AND IBRD. IN THE MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY SEMINAR, THE IBRD PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE. UNICEF PROGRAMMING IS STILL LARGELY SEPARATE. FULL COORDINATION OF ALL UN ACTIVITIES IS NATURALLY CONSTRAINED BY THE SEPARATE FUNDING OF SOME OF THEM, BUT OUR OBSERVATION IS THAT THERE IS GROWING COHESION AND THAT THE IMPROVING SYSTEM IS WORKING REASONABLY WELL.

3. COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEWS

THE MAIN REVIEW PROCESS AT PRESENT IS THROUGH THE UNDP FIVE-YEAR COUNTRY PROGRAMME (1972-76), WHICH WAS ISSUED ABOUT A YEAR AGO. ALTHOUGH THIS PLAN HAS NEVER BEEN FORMALLY SUBMITTED TO THE UN GOVERNING COUNCIL, IT IS STILL THE BASIC GUIDE TO THE UNDP PROGRAM IN VIETNAM. (THE USAID PARTICIPATED EXTENSIVELY IN REVIEWING AND COMMENTING ON THIS DOCUMENT AND, ALTHOUGH NOT ALL OF THE USAID COMMENTS WERE INCORPORATED, THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT.) THERE HAS BEEN NO FORMAL REVIEW OF

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THIS PLAN AS YET. RATHER, THE MAIN EMPHASIS TO DATE HAS BEEN ON ACHIEVING THE RAPID ACCELERATION THAT IS PROJECTED. OF THE \$10 MILLION INDICATIVE PLANNING FIGURE FOR THE FIVE YEARS, EXPENDITURES STARTED FROM \$1.1 MILLION IN 1972, WERE TO CONTINUE TO ABOUT THAT LEVEL IN 1973 WITH THE PHASING OUT OF A NUMBER OF OLD PROGRAMS BEING OFFSET BY THE INITIATION OF NEW ONES, AND WERE PROJECTED TO RISE TO A TOTAL OF \$3.2 MILLION IN 1974. THE PROGRAM APPEARS TO BE ON SCHEDULE.

4. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

PROJECT-BY-PROJECT REVIEW AS PER REF (B) IS HANDLED, IN ADDITION TO THE REVIEW OF THE FIVE YEAR PROGRAM NOTED ABOVE, BY THE SUBMISSION OF ALL UNDP PROJECT PROPOSALS TO USAID (AND TO OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES) FOR COMMENT. THIS FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS IS, HOWEVER, GENERALLY MUCH LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE INFORMAL ONE IN WHICH THE USAID TECHNICAL DIVISIONS ARE ORDINARILY CONSULTED ON THE PROJECT IN THE PROCESS OF ITS FORMULATION.

5. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION OF ONGOING PROJECTS IS PROCEEDING WITH A REASONABLE DEGREE OF SUCCESS. THE LARGEST PROJECT TO DATE HAS BEEN OFFSHORE FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT. PHASE I OF THIS PROJECT, CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE OFFSHORE FISH RESOURCES OF VIETNAM, IS NOW NEARING COMPLETION. ALTHOUGH THE FINAL REPORT, BEING PREPARED BY FAO IN ROME, IS NOT YET COMPLETE, THE SUCCESS ALREADY ACHIEVED HAS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE INITIATION OF PHASE II, WHICH WILL BE MORE CONCERNED WITH OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF EXPLOITING VIETNAM'S FISH RESOURCES. THE SECOND LARGEST PROJECT HAS BEEN THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, ALSO FINANCED IN PART FROM THE UN SPECIAL FUND. THIS PROJECT, INITIATED IN JANUARY 1968, GOT OFF TO A VERY SLOW START. ITS IMPLEMENTATION IMPROVED, BUT WAS NEVER VERY SATISFACTORY, DUE IN PART TO THE FREQUENT CHANGES OF COUNTERPART TEACHING STAFF. (IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT THE PROBLEM OF HOST COUNTRY COUNTERPARTS, WHICH AT BEST IS A DIFFICULT ONE IN MOST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IS COMPOUNDED IN VIETNAM BY THE LARGE PROPORTION OF AVAILABLE SKILLED PEOPLE WHO ARE NEEDED FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE.) IT WAS SUBSTANTIALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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TERMINATED IN 1972 AND WAS COMPLETELY PHASED OUT IN 1973. IN THE FIELDS OF INDUSTRY AND OF LABOR, THE COMPLETION OF FIVE OLDER PROJECTS AND THE INITIATION OF 12 NEW ONES (MOSTLY SMALL, BUT SUBSTANTIAL IN TOTAL) ARE PROCEEDING AS SCHEDULED. IN EDUCATION, THE MAJOR PAST PROJECT HAS BEEN THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, WHICH, AS DISCUSSED ABOVE, HAS BEEN TERMINATED. CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION IS BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THE EDUCATION FIELD, INCLUDING SOME CLOSELY COORDINATED ACTIVITIES WHERE THE UNDP IS CARRYING ON IN FIELDS PREVIOUSLY COVERED BY AID. THE WHO PROGRAM HAS BEEN THE LARGEST UN PROGRAM IN RECENT YEARS. ONE NEW PROJECT, MALARIA ERADICATION, HAS NOT GOT UNDER WAY AS RAPIDLY AS HAD BEEN HOPED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL PROJECT IS CONSIDERED VERY SUCCESSFUL. OTHER PROJECTS FALL IN BETWEEN.

6. PROJECT EVALUATION

THE UNDP TRIPARTITE REVIEW SYSTEM HAS RECENTLY BEEN STARTED HERE. IT IS BELIEVED TO BE MORE SYSTEMATIC AND HENCE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION SYSTEM. IT WILL ALSO TO A DEGREE REPLACE THE PREVIOUS REPORTING SYSTEM SO THERE IS NO RECENT ANNUAL REPORT.

7. SUMMARY CONCLUSION

THE UNDP PROGRAM IS EXPANDING RAPIDLY. IT HAS GONE FROM 26 PERSONNEL IN-COUNTRY A YEAR AGO TO 50 AT PRESENT AND IS EXPECTED TO TOTAL 100 WITHIN A FEW MONTHS. THE FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY OF THIS GROWING UNDP PROGRAM IS INDICATED BY THE FACT THAT OF THE 51 PROJECTS IN THE 1972-76 COUNTRY PROGRAMME, 10 WERE COMPLETED IN 1972 AND 1973 AND ABOUT 25 HAVE BEEN INITIATED, OR ARE BEING INITIATED, IN 1973 AND 1974.
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